

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

AID-05 SCCT-01 SR-02 ORM-01 EA-06 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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R 270230Z JUN 75

FM AQEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7228

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 3133

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, BG, IN, CH

SUBJ: INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS: ALL QUIET

SUMMARY: RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND BNAGLADESH, AT  
LEAST AS SEEN FROM DACCA, APPEAR TO HAVE ENTERED A

PERIOD OF QUIET. WHILE A MEASURE OF THE SOFTER TONE  
MAY INVOLVED CONSCIOUS EFFORTS ON THE PART OF BOTH  
COUNTRIES TO DOWNPLAY OUTSTANDING ISSUES, IT SEEMS  
CLEAR THAT THE SCOPE FOR CONTENTION HAS ALSO CON-  
TRACTED. END SUMMARY.

1. OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS, THE CHIEF ISSUES  
WHICH HAD ENLIVENED INDO-BANGALEE RELATIONS --  
FARAKKA BARRAGE AND THE DELINEATION OF A MARITIME  
BOUNDARY -- HAVE RECEIVED ALMOST NO ATTENTION IN  
DACCA. INsofar AS THE BANGLADESH SIDE IS CONCERNEED,  
THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS QUIET: (I) THE  
PROBLEMS ARE WELL ON THEIR WAY TO SLOUTION, AND THUS  
ARE NO LONGER MATTERS FOR CONCERN AND COMMENT, OR (II)  
WHATEVER POINT MAY HAVE BEEN REACHED ON THE PATH TO RESO-  
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LUTION, THE EMERGENCY POWERS ACT MAKES PUBLIC COMMENT

HIGHLY RISKY (THE PRESS WAS INHIBITED BY THE EPR BUT IS NOW IMPLY SILENCED DBLOWING THE BDG'S PRESS TAKE-OVER). WE THINK BOTH APPLY. THE STEAM HAS DONE OUT OF BOTH ISSUES, BUT EVEN IF IT HAD NOT, NO ONE WOULD WANT TO CALL DOWN OFFICIAL IRE.

2. REGARDING THE FARAKKA BARRAGE ISSUE, NOTHING HAS BEEN FINALLY RESOLVED. THE FORTY-DAY PERIOD FOR "TESTING" THE WORKING OF THE BARRAGE WHICH WAS DECIDED UPON ON APRIL 18 (SEE DACCA 1917) HAS NOW ENDED. INsofar AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THE JOINT INDO-BANGALEE TEAMS DEPLOYED IN BOTH BANGLADESH AND WEST BEGAL TO OBSERVE THE EFFECTS OF THE BARRAGE'S OPERATION HAVE YET TO OFFER ANY ASSESSMENT OR RECOMMENDATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, OFFICERS IN BOTH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) AND THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION DISPLAY SUBSTANTIAL RELAXATION AS THEY DISCUSS THE PROBLEM. KAISER MURSHED, MFA'S DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR THE SUB-CONTINENT, POINTS OUT THAT THE APRIL 21 - MAY 31 "TEST" PERIOD CARRIED INDIA AND BANGLADESH THROUGH THE ANNUAL "LEAN" PERIOD, AND THAT THERE ARE NINE MORE MONTHS BEFORE THE GANGA'S FLOW DIMINISHES TO A POINT AT WHICH SOME DIVISION OF WATERS IS NECESSARY. AND FROM INDIAN DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER A.K. DAS WE GAIN THE IMPRESSION THAT BY THAT TIME THE FINDINGS OF THE JOINT TEAMS WILL PERMIT AGREEMENT ON SHARING OF THE WATERS. (MURSHED ADDS THAT SINCE THE FARAKKA BARRAGE HAS DEVELOPED STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS, THE NEED FOR AN AGREEMENT MAY HAVE BELME LESS PRESSING.)

3. INsofar AS THE MARITIME BOUNDARY IS CONCERNED, MURSHED STRESSES THAT THE MATTER WAS TOUCHED UPON BY PRESIDENT MUJIBUR RAHMAN AND PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI WHEN THEY MET IN NEW DELHI ON THE EVE OF THE KINGSTON COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE. WHILE HE CLAIMS

NO PRECISE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT WAS SAID ABOUT THE MARITIME BOUNDARY, MURSHED VOICED MORE CONFIDENCE THAN EVER THAT RESOLUTION WILL POSE NO GREAT PROBLEM. WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT THE POSITION ADVIANCED BY MUJIB WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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SIGNIFICANTLY LESS RIGID THAN THAT HELD IN THE PAST, AND MAY HAVE REFLECTED THE VIEW ATTRIBUTED TO MUJIB BY ANOTHER SOURCE A WEEK BEFORE THE NEW DELHI MEETING IN WHICH THE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT ANY COMPROMISE LINE WHICH DID NOT AFFECT THE ASHLAND OIL AREA (SEE DACCA 1919). DAS IS LESS FORTHCOMING THAN MURSHED BUT THE SAGUINE

TONE OF HIS COMMENTS ON THE ISSUE SUGGEST THAT THE INDIANS NO LONGER FEEL THAT THEY MUST DEAL WITH AN EXTRA-VAGANT BANGALEE CLAIM.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH WILL CONTINUE TO BE RACKED BY A VARIETY OF PROBLEMS, MOST OF WHICH WILL BE LOW LEVEL IRRITANTS. THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO THINK THAT SMUGGLING AND THE ILLICIT MOVEMENT OF PERSONS CAN BE HALTED. EFFORTS TO CONTROL BOTH WILL CONTINUE BUT COMPLETE SUPPRESSION WOULD SEEM IMPOSSIBLE. THE SIZE AND CHARACTER OF THE TRAFFIC ARE DESCRIBED BY BANGALEES PRIMARILY IN IMPRESSIONISTIC FASHION, BUT ALWAYS IN TERMS OF THE COSTS OCCASIONED BANLADESH BY MARWARIS. TO A LARGE DEGREE, SMUGGLING HAS BECOME AN ELEMENT IN BANGLADESH'S POPULAR MYTHOLOGY, AND THE VERY DIFFICULTY IN DETERMINING THE SIZE OF THE FLOWS IS WELCOMED BY THOSE WHO FEAR OR REQUIRE THE EXISTECCE OF AN INDIAN BOGEY.

5. THE ILLICIT MOVEMENT OF PERSONS RECEIVES VERY LITTLE ATTENTION HERE. NO ONE IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY SEEMS ANXIOUS TO TALK ABOUT THE MOVEMENT OF TERRO-RISTS OR ARMS, WHETHER TO OR FROM INDIA. IN PART, IT IS PROBABLY A LACK OF HARD INTELLIGENCE BUT, EQUALLY, IT IS RELUCTANCE TO TALK ABOUT A SENSITIVE SUBJECT. INSOFAR AS THE MORE GENERAL MOVEMENTS ARE CONCERNED, THEY ARE, TO A VERY LARGE DEGREE, A FUNCTION OF BANGLADESH'S POVERTY. WHATEVER ALLEGATIONS MAY BE MADE ABOUT CONCERTED EFFORTS TO DRIVE HINDUS FROM BANGLADESH, WE TEND TO FIND THEM OF LIMITED PERSUASIVENESS. RATHER, SINCE HINDUS WHO MIGRATE TEND TO COME VERY LOW ON EVETRYBODY'S PRIORITY LIST AND, MOREOVER, PROVIDE A LARGE NUMBER OF THE COUNTRY'S POOREST, WE THINK THEIR

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MOTIVES ECONOMIC. WE ACCEPT THAT A HIGH PROPORTION OF THOSE CROSSING INTO INDIA ARE HINDUS (THE 70/30 RATION SEEMS UNSURPRISING) BUT SUSPECT THEY ARE SPURRED BY A BELIEF THAT THEY CAN MORE EASILY FIND FOOD AND WORK IN INDIA THAN CAN BANGALEE MUSLIMS.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 270230Z JUN 75

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7229

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 3133

6. THERE IS SPECULATION THAT BANGLADESH'S RECENT DEVALUATION MAY CAUSE SOME STRAINS. THERE ARE REPORTS OF UNHAPPINESS IN THE INDIA JUTE TRADE OVER THE IMPACT OF LOWER BANGALEE PRICES ON THEIR COMPETITIVE POSITION. BANGALEES CONTEND THAT THEY ALREADY HAVE OBSERVED A MEASURE OF INDIAN RETALIATION. THEY ASSERT THAT A RECENT INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF COAL IMPORTED FROM INDIA IS INTENDED TO SOAK UP SOME OF THE ADDITIONAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE WHICH BANGLADESH MIGHT HOPE TO EARN AS A RESULT OF DEVALUATION.

7. BANGALEES NEVERTHELESS SEEM TO THINK THAT INDIA SIMPLY WILL NOT GIVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO BANGLADESH OVER THE NEXT TEN MONTHS. THEY SEE THE APPROACH OF THE 1976 GENERAL ELECTIONS AS TURNING INDIAN THOUGHTS INWARD, AND THINK THIS PROCESS INTENSIFIED BY THE GUJARAT ELECTION AND, MORE FORCEFULLY, BY MRS. GANDHI'S ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES TRAIL AND ITS AFTERMATH. (BANALEES ARE VERY INTERESTED IN THE WHOLE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE CONFRONTING INDIA. CIVIL LIBERTARIANS TEND TO FIND THE PROCESS FILLED WITH HOPE, WHATEVER THE OUTCOME MAY BE, WHILE BAKSAL POWER BROKERS POINT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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MRS. GANDHI'S TRAVAIL AS EXCELLENT JUSTIFICATION FOR BANGLADESH'S PRESENT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND RELIANCE ON A SINGLE PARTY. GIVEN BANGLADESH'S INTEREST IN SOUND RELATIONS WITH INDIA, HOWEVER, THE PRESS REPORTS

ONLY THE FACTS AND WITHOLDS ANY COMMENT IT MIGHT ONCE  
HAVE BEEN EAGER TO VOICE.)

8. WHATEVER VALIDITY THE IDEA OF AN INDIA TURNED INWARD  
MAY HAVE, IT IS OUR VIEW THAT, FOR THE MOMENT,  
THERE IS LESS FOR THE INDIANS AND BANGALEES TO ARGUE  
ABOUT. IF FARAKKA IS NOT EXACTLY SETTLED YET, IT IS  
UNLIKELY TO BECOME AN ISSUE UNTIL NEXT SPRING; BY THEN  
THE ELECTIONS WILL BE OVER AND CALCUTTA'S CONCERNS FOR  
THE HOOGHLY LESS PRESSING POLITICALLY. MURSHED SUGGESTED  
THAT THE "TEST" AGREEMENT MIGHT EVEN SERVE AS  
A PRECEDENT FOR ANNUAL "LEAN PERIOD" AGREEMENTS WHICH  
WOULD LEAVE A FINAL DECISION FOR SOME INDETERMINATE  
FUTURE DATE. THE MARITIME BOUNDARY ISSUE SEEMS TO  
BE UNDER CONTROL; IF IT IS NOT SETTLED BY THE TIME CON-  
CESSION HOLDERS ARE READY TO BEGIN DRILLING, IT COULD  
COME ALIVE AGAIN, BUT NO DRILLING IS EXPECTED BEFORE  
OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER. THE APPEARANCE OF THE CHINESE ON  
THE DACCA SCENE COULD WELL LEAD TO SOME HEARTBURN ON  
THE PART OF THE INDIANS (AND, AS A RESULT, QUIET  
GLOATING BY THE BANGALEES); HOWEVER, RECOGNITION IS  
NOT EXPECTED BEFORE THE END OF 1975. OVER THE COMING  
MONTHS, THE PRESENT QUIET SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAN NOT  
TO CONTINUE.  
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